

THE RECORD OF CONGRESS

NOTABLE EFFECT ON PRESIDENT TAFT'S POPULARITY.

By His Tact and Firmness He Has Gained Nearly All the Legislation He Recommended—No Recent First Session of Congress Has Accomplished So Much.

WASHINGTON, June 25.—The session of Congress which came to an end to-night leaves a remarkable record for legislation. Mr. Roosevelt when he was in the White House referred to the first session of the Fifty-ninth Congress as having done more substantial work for good than any other Congress since he had become familiar with public affairs. Yet the record of the first session of the Fifty-ninth Congress is not comparable in length or importance with the list of measures that have been placed on the statute books in the last seven months. Indeed it has been said by old time members of Congress that the record of the session that has just closed has exceeded that of any single session since the civil war days.

Next in interest to the legislation itself is the notable effect that the work of the Congress has had on President Taft's popularity throughout the country and the stimulus that has been given to hopes of Republican success in the fall elections. Two months ago it seemed as if the White House had been almost buried under the steady flow of criticism, and President Taft's closest friends admitted that the outlook for his political future was dark. The President himself was disheartened and acknowledged that chances for Republican success in the fall were slight. In talking with his friends he went so far as to indicate that he had no disposition to make any active effort to be renominated. At the same time, however, the President declared that he would take no short cut to popularity, that he would continue to administer his office as he thought best and stand or fall on his record.

The country within the last few weeks has given decided evidence of its approval of Mr. Taft's course. From the middle West, where a month or so ago was extremely hostile to nearly all of President Taft's suggestions, are coming flattering reports of the President's popularity, and even Mr. Taft's political enemies acknowledge that the future has taken on a more promising aspect for him. For the Republican party also the record of the Congress that has just closed has done wonders. The Congress leaders, who were only a few weeks ago throwing up their hands in despair at the prospect for next November's elections, are declaring now that the Republican party will be able to go before the country with a record that will land them again safely in control of the House of Representatives. Everybody in Washington realizes that the critical situation which the Republican party was facing has had a good deal to do with its remarkable record of legislation in this session. All appreciate the fact that without some exceptional ground to stand on the party campaign in the fall would be practically hopeless. Yet with this strong incentive to legislate it is certain that many of the party's efforts would have failed had it not been for President Taft's tact and determination.

If the President had followed the advice of some Senate leaders early in the session it is doubtful if he would have got any of the big measures for which he was contending. The President's friends urged him to retaliate on the Senate insurgents, to go out into their districts openly and assail and crush them. This President Taft persistently refused to do and with great forbearance refrained from attacking the progressives even when they were bitter in their criticisms of his administration. The President replied that he was only after votes for his measures, that he was not out to make or unmake any man politically and that he believed that he could do more for his measures by refraining from engaging in open conflict with the insurgent leaders.

The result of his tact was that on all of his important measures he finally got the solid party vote in both the House and the Senate, something that President Roosevelt had not succeeded in doing since the Hon. Robert M. La Follette entered the Senate.

The fight over the rules in the House also presented a situation which might easily have wrecked the Taft legislative programme if Mr. Taft had shown less discernment. In this matter he also refused absolutely to take sides and steered a middle course so successfully that he was able later to use either faction in the House whenever he deemed it necessary.

Mr. Taft's friends believe that his self-restraint and tactfulness in dealing with the factions in the Republican party and his firmness in insisting on his legislative programme entitle him to the credit for the record which the session has just completed.

Here are the important measures promulgated in the Republican national platform which President Taft urged upon and obtained from Congress:

The railroad bill, extending the legislative power of the Government over common carriers by rail.

The establishment of postal savings banks.

The creation of a commission to inquire into stock and bond issues of railroads with a view to ascertaining if they have been watered or not and recommending remedial legislation to Congress.

The creation of a bureau of mines and mining, with an appropriation of \$500,000 for its administration.

Admission of Arizona and New Mexico into the Union as States.

Authority granted to the President to withdraw certain classes of public lands from entry in pursuance of the national conservation policy.

Increase in the navy by construction of two first class battleships, four torpedo boats and other craft.

The following legislation was enacted upon the President's recommendation, although not included in the platform:

Prohibition of campaign contributions in national and Congressional elections.

The further perfection of the laws in regard to the use of safety appliances on railroads.

The creation of a commission with a view to obtaining facts on which the Federal departments may be reorganized in the interest of economy.

Admission of Arizona and New Mexico into the Union as States.

and expedite procedure of Federal courts. A new form of government for Alaska. Increase in postage rates on magazines and periodicals.

Amendment to the Sherman anti-trust law permitting the Federal incorporation of corporations engaged in interstate commerce.

Of these recommendations which failed only three—legislation in regard to injunctions, the merchant marine and the creation of a new bureau of public health—were promised in the Republican platform. The Federal regulation of stock and bond issues also was promised in the platform, but the pledge was practically fulfilled through the authorization of a commission to investigate the subject and recommend legislation at the next session.

The President by no means has dropped these propositions. The anti-injunction legislation was not called up because the leadership of Congress thought it might jeopardize at this time the rest of the Taft programme, and the proposition to establish a national health bureau stirred up widespread opposition among homeopaths and other schools.

Consequently the legislation was enacted that was not either recommended by the President or included in the national platform. In this class are the following:

An act to prevent the sale of adulterated and misbranded Paris green and insecticides required by farmers' organizations.

An act providing regulations designed to prevent collisions between vessels.

An act to permit agricultural entries on coal lands.

An act to permit the parole of United States prisoners after conviction warrants the showing of mercy.

The fixing of telegraph and telephone companies within the operation of the interstate commerce act as common carriers.

An act licensing customs brokers.

An act to compel common carriers to furnish to the Interstate Commerce Commission full reports of accidents.

An act establishing a commission of fine arts.

An act authorizing the raising of the wreck of the battleship Maine.

An act to protect the seal fisheries of Alaska.

An act to promote the efficiency of the militia.

An act to prevent gambling in cotton futures.

An act to further protect the big trees of California and also an act to establish a new park, to be known as the Glacier National Park, in Montana near the Canadian border.

The Democrats themselves may be able to find some comfort in the Republican record of legislation, for the bills enacted include six propositions that were mentioned in the Democratic national platform. They are: Further regulation of railroads, curbing of the power of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Federal regulation of telephones and telegraphs, Statehood for Arizona and New Mexico, legislation to conserve national resources and legislation to effect economy in public expenditures.

By no means the least important item in the record of the past session was the changing by the House of the rules governing that body. The Committee on Rules, through which the Speaker is supposed to have exercised his so-called "Zarlike power," was enlarged and was made elective instead of appointive. The Speaker himself being eliminated from the committee. A further change in the rules which will have marked effect on the procedure in the House in future sessions was that providing for the election of a committee from consideration of a measure and paying the way for its being called up in the House.

UNCLE JOE PRAISES CONGRESS.

Says the Sixty-first is the Greatest Ever Dig at the Insurgents.

WASHINGTON, June 25.—In the dying hours of the present session Uncle Joe Cannon gave out a statement giving his opinion of the work accomplished thus far in the Sixty-first Congress. Said he:

"In my judgment the two sessions of the Sixty-first Congress have accomplished more and done better work than any other Congress of which I have been a member. It has rarely occurred that a Congress enacting a new tariff law has accomplished much else save handling the appropriations for the Government.

This Congress has not only revised the tariff without disturbing business but it has enacted important legislation amending the interstate commerce law, making that law more effective, giving the Interstate Commerce Commission greater power and creating a court of commerce, and this without seriously affecting the business of railroads or checking their increase of wages to their employees.

"I can say to you to meet the definition of statesmanship in legislation, and I can say this without selfish pride, because the legislation was enacted under the leadership of the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, with the Hon. James R. Mann as chairman.

"This Congress has also enacted a postal savings bank law, which is entirely new legislation, blazing a new trail in law-making in this country. In my judgment this is the best illustration of party legislation we have had in many years and it fully justifies the necessity for party action in a great legislative body. If there had not been party solidarity on this bill there would have been no legislation creating postal savings banks."

Mr. Cannon reviewed the other measures that have been passed in this session and added:

"The appropriations have been large, but not nearly as large as demanded by the people who were agitating over the development of the various departments of the Government. There has not been a single appropriation bill that has not been increased by non-partisan vote in the House over the report from the committee. This would seem to indicate that the demand for economy is like the demand for reduction of the tariff and always applies to the appropriations other than those in which the agitators are interested.

The people who want a larger navy are willing to economize on everything else, and the people who want those who want large appropriations for the Department of Agriculture, for the army, for the improvement of rivers and harbors, for public buildings and for all the other activities of the Federal Government.

"The Democrats have talked about economy, but they have helped enlarge every appropriation, and there are bills introduced by Democrats and not acted on which would cost \$50,000,000 additional expenditure. So I take it they talk of economy in Pickwickian. As I said in the beginning, the work of this Congress has been greater than any other with which I have been connected as a member, and it has adopted constructive legislation in the face of destructive tactics and efforts to create factional strife. These efforts, I regret to say, have received more attention in the public press than the real work of legislation, and having given so much space to these efforts at the expense of the record of work, it is not surprising that some of the editors should suddenly discover in these last days that the Republican Congress has enacted laws to carry out the pledges of the Republican platform and then jump at the conclusion that this work has been done in haste before the adjournment instead of being the painstaking effort of seven months by the committee and the members of Congress.

"This work of legislation has gone on quietly and effectively, while those who view Congress from a distance have been assuming that the House was doing nothing but changing its rules. The changes of rules have contributed to the pleasure and the power of some individuals in the House, but the current of legislation itself has moved on as usual with little disturbance on account of a few new methods and with little advantage therefrom.

"I do not think the work of a Congress should be measured by the volume of legislation but by the character of the legislation and the care taken in its consideration. Measured by that standard, the Sixty-first Congress will take a high place in the record of legislation. There have been, however, less than 1,000 of the 37,000 bills considered and reported from committees and about 200 public laws enacted in this session as against 400 public laws for the entire Sixtieth Congress. I can commend the entire membership of the House for industry and intelligence in their legislative work of this session."

AMERICAN TURKISH RAILROAD To Penetrate Asia Minor and Armenia—Germans Oppose It.

WASHINGTON, June 25.—The Turkish Government has under consideration an application of the Ottoman-American Development Company of New York for a concession to construct and operate a railway system in Asia Minor. The concession has already been approved by the Ottoman Minister of Public Works and by the Council of State. It is now pending before the Council of Ministers, by which it will be referred to the Turkish Parliament for final ratification.

The proposed railway system has a total of about 2,000 kilometers or 1,200 miles in length and involves an estimated expenditure of about \$100,000,000. The main line will run from Suediye, a port on the Mediterranean Sea, to the city of Diarbekir, and thence to Bitlis and Van. The company has asked no subsidy or guarantee from the Turkish Government, except the exclusive right to work the mineral deposits along the line.

The German Ambassador at Constantinople has protested against the granting of the concession on the ground that it conflicts with the rights and privileges granted to the German group holding concessions for the Baghdad railroad and that it is also in conflict with the Turkish mining law of 1907, which was passed at the time the Germans consented to an increase of from 8 to 11 per cent. in the Turkish customs duties.

It is understood, however, that the legal advisers of both the Ottoman Government and the American Development Company have reported that the position of the German Government is untenable and that the proposed concession in no way conflicts with either the Baghdad concession or with the Turkish mining law. Several weeks ago the Secretary of State Knox, who is lending diplomatic support to the American enterprise, began direct negotiations with the German Government to overcome its objections.

Germany is the only power opposing the concession. Great Britain, France, Russia and Italy, it is understood, have no objection to the project. The opposition of the German Government, it is said, has caused surprise among officers of the State Department, because Germany has advocated an "open door" policy in China, Morocco, Persia and other parts of the world.

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SIGNS RIVER AND HARBOR BILL

PRESIDENT GIVES IT HIS APPROVAL RELUCTANTLY.

Says He Had Made Up His Mind at One Time to Veto It—Serves Notice on Congress That It Needn't Expect to Get His Signature to Another Like It.

WASHINGTON, June 25.—President Taft signed the river and harbor bill, carrying \$2,000,000, this afternoon, but in doing so he served notice on Congress that it need never expect to get his approval to another river and harbor measure drawn along the old familiar lines. The President made the shivers run up and down the backs of some Representatives when they learned from his message how close they had come to losing this big pork barrel measure. The President said that he had made up his mind at one time to veto the bill in the hope of establishing a reform in such appropriations but he had concluded that such action would result in too great damage to projects that are already under way. What the President objects to chiefly is the piecemeal method of appropriation for river and harbor improvements, and he informs Congress that in the future he will expect them to proceed along more systematic lines, first determining what undertakings are feasible and the most urgent and then making sufficient appropriations for these comparatively few projects to insure their completion in a reasonably short time.

To the Senate and House of Representatives: I have approved the bill H. R. 20854, entitled "An act making appropriations for the construction, repair and preservation of certain public works on rivers and harbors and for other purposes," and while I have signed the bill I venture to submit a memorandum of explanation and comment.

The President then recites the improvements called for by the bill and continues:

The chief defect in the bill is the large number of projects appropriated for and the uneconomical method of carrying on these projects by the appropriation of sums small in comparison to the amounts required to effect completion.

The figures convincingly establish the fact that this bill makes inadequate provision for too many projects. The total of the bill, \$2,000,000, is not really large, but the policy of small appropriations, without provision for their completion, is unwise. It tends to waste thus considerable sums of money and the projects are likely to cost more than if they were left to contractors who were authorized to complete the whole work within a reasonably short time.

The appropriation of a small sum lessens the sense of responsibility of those who are to adopt the project and who do not foresee the consequences of the work they would give if the appropriation or contract involved the full amount needed for completion. Moreover, the appropriation of a comparatively small sum for a doubtful enterprise is thereafter used by its advocates to force further provision for it from Congress on the ground that the investment made is a conclusive recognition of the wisdom of the project, and its continuance becomes a necessity to save the money already spent. This has been called a "piecemeal" policy. It is proposed to remedy this defect by an annual river and harbor bill, but that hardly avoids the objectionable character of such yearly appropriations as are apt to be affected by the state of the Treasury and political exigency.

If enterprises are to be useful as encouraging means of transportation they ought to be finished within a reasonable time. The delays in completing them postpone the business and increase the cost. The proper policy, it seems to me, is to determine from the many projects proposed and recommended what are the most important, and then to proceed to complete them with due despatch, and then to take up others and do the same thing with them.

There has been frequent discussion of late years as to the proper course to be pursued in the development of our inland waterways, and I think the general sentiment has been that we should have a comprehensive system agreed upon by some competent body of experts, who should pass upon the entire merits of the various projects and recommend the order in which they should be begun and completed.

Under the present system every project is submitted to army engineers, who pass upon the question whether it ought to be adopted, but they have no power to pass upon the relative importance of the different projects they approve or to suggest the most economical and business-like order for their completion.

Gen. Marshall while chief engineer at my request furnished me a memorandum in respect to the bill then pending in the Senate in which he has made the criticisms made in the discussion of it in Congress. He considers the bill to be quite as good as any of its predecessors, but points out the defects I have mentioned above and also suggests that the old projects provided for in the bill include some which were never recommended by the engineers, and some forms of work recommended would not be now recommended because of a change of conditions.

Congress should refer the old projects to boards of army engineers for further consideration and recommendation. This would enable us to know what of the old projects are to be retained and to know Marshall's plain intimation is that a number of old projects call for action of this kind.

I have given to the consideration of this bill the full ten days since its submission to me and some time before that. The objections are to the system, for it may be concluded by the members of the House that it is a good bill and they could under the "piecemeal" policy. I once reached the conclusion that it was my duty to interpose a veto in order if possible to secure a change in the method of framing these bills. Subsequent consideration has altered my view as to my duty.

It is now three years since the river and harbor bill was passed. The projects under way are in urgent need of further appropriation for maintenance and continuance and there is great and justified pressure for many of the new projects provided for by the bill. It has been made clear to me that the construction of the new locks late in the session would seriously embarrass the constructing engineers. I do not think, therefore, the defects of the bill which I have pointed out will justify the postponement of all this important work. But I do think that in the preparation of the proposed future yearly bill Congress should adopt the reforms here suggested, and that a failure to do so would justify withholding Executive approval, even though a river and harbor bill fall.

WILLIAM H. TAFT.

THE WHITE HOUSE, June 25, 1910.

OUR NATIONAL DEFENSES.

Congress Calls on the Secretary of War for a Statement as to Their Condition.

WASHINGTON, June 25.—Just before the House adjourned to-day the ground-work was laid for important legislation of the future for the national defense. There have been reports in Washington for a long time that the Administration is concerned over the country's unpreparedness for war and that the President has no objection to the facts becoming known. Publicity of the exact state of the nation's defenses is assured as a result of the passage by the House of the McLachlan resolution, which calls on the Secretary of War for a statement as to the condition of defenses available in case of an invasion on either coast.

With the resolution was a statement by Gen. Oliver, Assistant Secretary of War, who said that the War Department would be glad of the opportunity to present to Congress the information called for with a view to the eventual enactment of legislation for a better and more economical utilization of the military resources of the country. "It is understood that the national defense will be made the subject of a chapter of the President's message to the Congress at the December session.

SAYED MAHOMET'S DAUGHTER.

Also All but Two of Her 13 Children, Who Were Trapped in Cellar Fire.

A second alarm had to be turned in before the firemen could subdue a fire that started early yesterday morning in the cellar of the Murray Oxygen Works at 410 Bleeker street.

Chief Croker took charge and allowed only six firemen at a time to enter the place. Explosions soon after the fire started at first kept the firemen out of the cellar. All they could do was to shove their crooked cellar pipes down the hatchway and flood the place. When the men finally entered they had to work in a considerable depth